

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-01 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 PPT-01 SCA-01 PM-03 DODE-00 H-01 SY-02 RSC-01

/045 W

----- 071290

R 171455Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7501

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

RUDKSABLAMEMBASSY SOFIA 1328

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0130

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, CZ, US

SUBJECT: TRAVEL CONTROLS

REFS: A) PRAGUE 2266

B) PRAGUE 3115

C) PRAGUE 107

1. REFTTEL A SET FORTH EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION, AND RATIONALE THEREFOR, THAT RECIPROCAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON U.S. AND CZECHOSLOVAK DIPLOMATS BE ABOLISHED. IN ADDITION TO CONSIDERATIONS OUTLINED IN THAT MESSAGE, I BELIEVE THAT OUR POSITION IN THE WAKE OF LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT MAKES IT EVEN MORE DESIRABLE THAT WE MOVE FORWARD ON THIS.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE, CZECHOSLOVAK POSITION IS THAT THE NEXT MOVE ON CLAIMS AGREEMENT IS UP TO US. AS EMBASSY IS EQUALLY WELL AWARE (AND AS I INDICATED TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK - REF C), IT IS LIKELY TO BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE ARE IN POSITION TO PUT FORTH ANY PROPOSALS IN THAT REGARD.

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3. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, IN CONSIDER IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT WE

BE ABLE TO PRESENT GOC WITH SOME EARNEST OF OUR GOOD FAITH AND OF OUR INTEREST IN BETTERING RELATIONS. PERHAPS THE ONLY AREA IN WHICH IT APPEARS POSSIBLE TO DO THAT AT THIS TIME IS THAT OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS.

4. I WOULD REITERATE THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT ONLY BE BENEFICIAL TO THE CZECHOSLOVAKS BUT WOULD SERVE U.S. INTERESTS AS WELL. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE CONCURS IN THIS ASSESSMENT. I WOULD ALSO NOTE THE OBVIOUS - THAT SUCH RESTRICTIONS ON THE U.S. SIDE SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE WHEN THEY NO LONGER APPLY TO CERTAIN OTHER EE COUNTRIES WHO MUST SHARE WITH USSR WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.

5. DESPITE OCCASIONAL SIGNALS LAST AUTUMN THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS MIGHT NOT AGREE TO ABOLITION OF RESTRICTIONS IF LONG-GRAVEL WENT THROUGH, ZANTOVSKY INDICATED TO DCM AFTER PASSAGE OF AMENDMENT (REF B) THAT PROPOSAL FOR MUTUAL ABOLITION WOULD STILL BE VIEWED POSITIVELY.

6. IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, I REQUEST THAT THE EMBASSY BE AUTHORIZED TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MFA ON THE RECIPROCAL ABOLITION OF CLOSED AREAS, WITH SUCH ABOLITION TO BE EFFECTIVE AT THE EARLIERST MUTALLY AGREEABLE DATE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CONSIDERING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLITY OF SIMULTANEOUS ACTION VIS-A-VIS HUNGARY,CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BULGARIA. I ALSO REALIZE THAT MY PROPOSAL MAY RUN COUNTER TO THE PRESENT EE RANK ORDER. IN MY OPINION, HOWEVER, THE DAMAGE DONE BY LONG-GRVAEL, THE RESULTANT PRESENT STATE OF US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, AND THE NECESSITY OF AT LEAST A MINIMAL GESTURE ON OUR PART WARRANT SUCH A

MOVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRAVEL CONTROLS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PRAGUE00130
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750019-0612
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750142/aaaabkrb.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 PRAGUE 2266
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <05 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRAVEL CONTROLS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, CZ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006